

## HIERARCHICAL COMMUNICATION IN JAVANESE

### ABSTRACT

Javanese is a well known for its speech levels called *ngoko* 'low' and *krama* 'high' which enable its speakers to show intimacy, deference, and hierarchy among the members of society. This research applies critically Brown and Gilman (1960)'s theory of terms of address to analyze the asymmetrical, factor which influence, and politeness of the use of speech levels in Javanese.

Method of observation, in depth interview, and document study were applied to provide the data. Recorded conversation then transcribed into written form, classified and codified according to the speech levels, and analyzed by politeness system (Scollon and Scollon, 2001) and status scale (Homes, 2001).

The use of speech levels shows asymmetric communication: two speakers use two different codes, i.e. *ngoko* and *krama* because of power (+P) and with/without distance (+/-D), and it is the reflection of hierarchical politeness. The asymmetrical use of *ngoko* and *krama* by God and His Angel, God and human beings strongly explicated the asymmetrical communication between superiors and inferiors. Finding of the research shows that the use of *ngoko* and *krama* could present the phenomena of code-switching, code-mixing, and the fundamental phenomenon is 'code-crossing'. It is concluded that hierarchical politeness in Javanese is 'social contract' i.e. the acknowledgment of the existence of high class (superior) and low class (inferior) which is implemented in 'communications contract' by using speech levels of the language of Java in line with status scale. Asymmetrical use of *ngoko* and *krama* indexed inequality, hierarchy, and harmony

**Key words:** *asymmetric, code-crossing, hierarchy, Javanese, speech levels*